



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



# Introduction

I am pleased to present this report on the activity of National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) during 2021, perhaps one of the most challenging years we have ever dealt with. As the Covid-19 Pandemic continued to evolve, at times threatening to overwhelm the health system, the response to the challenge evolved too, with social distancing, working from home, and changed ways of communicating as a team.

Then, hit with the second blow of the cyber-attack on elements of the HSE network, our team was forced to adapt again, devising new ways of working outside the computer network, and adapting new but frictionless paper solutions to what had been simple digital processes.

I wish to commend my team here at NDTP for how they rose to these challenges. They displayed resilience, ingenuity, and calm in the face of pressure, and I look forward to seeing what we can achieve when we enter hopefully calmer waters in the future.

National Doctors Training Planning was established in 2014 to fulfil the statutory role of the HSE in relation to postgraduate doctor training. While NDTP continues to fulfil these original responsibilities, the role has expanded to include Medical Workforce Planning, the Consultant Approval Process and the management of the Doctors Integrated Management E-System (DIME) database.

Last year NDTP published two Medical Workforce Planning reports and implemented a host of updates to the DIME and E-Portfolio systems.

The largest component of our responsibilities in NDTP is to Postgraduate Medical Training, which is delivered in partnership with Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies, the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies, Intern Networks, the Medical Council and clinical sites in Hospitals, Primary Care and Mental Health Services.

Working closely with our partners, NDTP continues to focus on growing the number of postgraduate training positions as well the development of educational supports for our doctors

in Ireland. I am pleased to report increases in a number of key indicators for this activity in 2021, including:

- transfer of GP training to the Irish College of General Practitioners;
- improvements to the Medical Intern experience;
- increased intake numbers for Specialist Training (5.4 % increase in Year 1 HST posts across all specialities);
- increase in consultant posts approvals (547 posts approved).

We continue to generate new initiatives to drive retention of our highly trained medical staff, and much progress has been made in the last year:

- funding a significant number of developmental funded projects that will contribute to the career development of doctors;
- expansion of job-sharing and flexible training opportunities to meet increased demand;
- Post-CSCST Fellowship posts increased to 40 after a significant further investment by the Minister for Health;
- an increase in NDTP NCHD Trainer Leads (84 leads appointed nationally);
- further expansion of the Spark Innovation programme, which was rewarded with a CIPD Award for Employee Engagement and Trust.

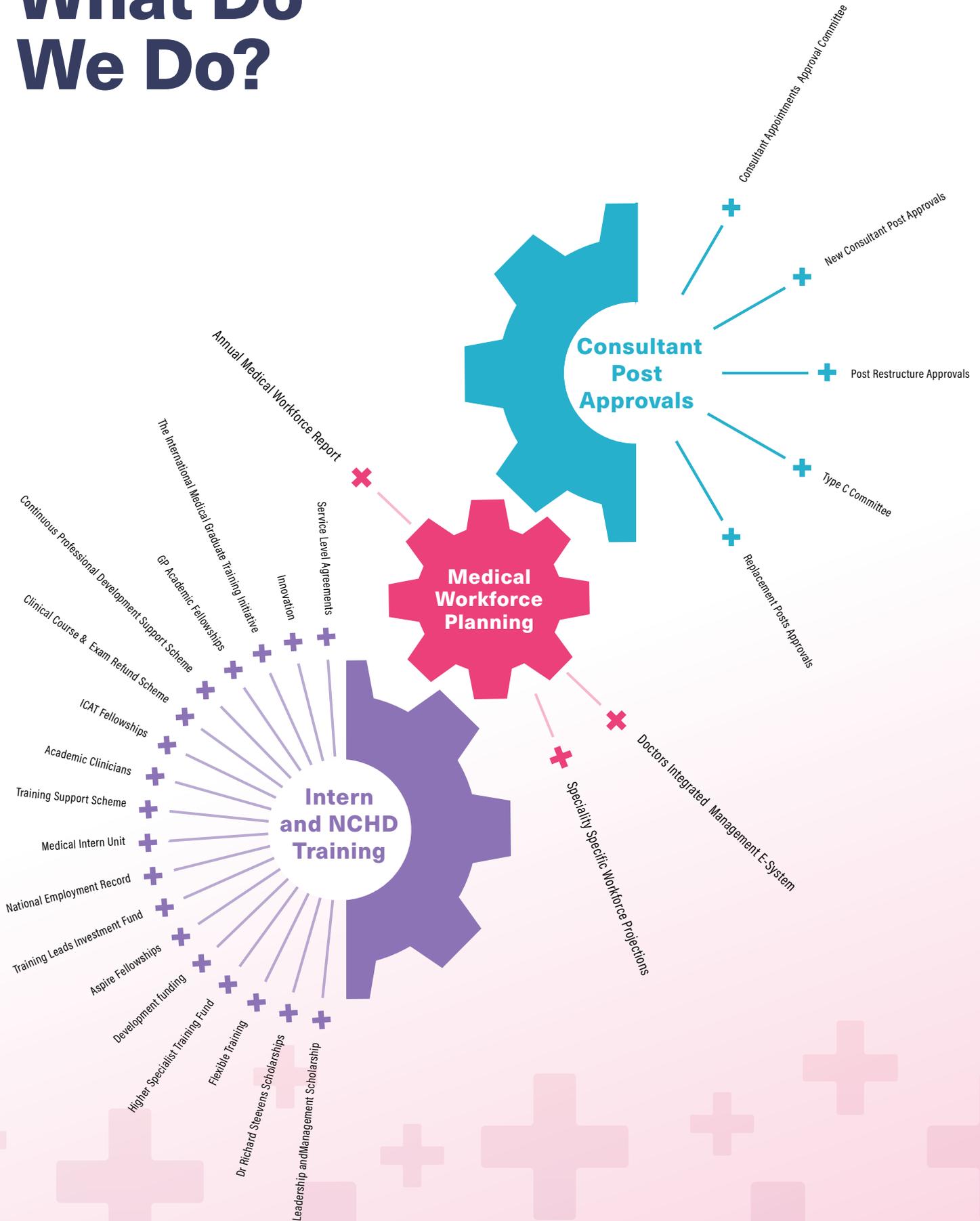
With what we have learned in the last two years about teamwork, training delivery, responsive workforce planning and flexible adaptation to circumstances, our focus for the year ahead will be informed by our Strategy document, which will be launched in Autumn 2022. We remain guided by the principle that patients should be treated by the right doctor, with the right training, in the right place, at the right time. Finally, I would like to thank our stakeholders, collaborators and partners across the Health Service and Medical Training for continuing to support our efforts to provide the best medical workforce planning, doctor training and career development ecosystem possible.

**Prof Brian Kinirons**

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# What Do We Do?



# Achievements & Outputs 2021

## Transfer of GP Training

The National GP training has historically been delivered by Primary Care division of HSE, via 14 separate GP Training Programmes. In October 2021, the full responsibility for General Practice training was transferred to the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) as the postgraduate training body. As part of the transfer process all General Practice Programme Directors and Assistant Programme Directors transferred their employment from the HSE to the ICGP.

The transfer allows for a new delivery model for GP Training to be implemented and will facilitate increased numbers of trainee GPs, which is essential to meet workforce planning projections of the HSE for General Practice.

Going forward a service level agreement will be in place between HSE NDTP and the ICGP for the delivery of the GP training programme.

## Trainer Lead Investment

In 2021 funding was provided to support local projects aimed at supporting NCHD education and experience at site. The purpose of this funding was not only for the direct provision of postgraduate training at site but also towards local projects designed to support NCHD training and experience at site level.

Recognising that each Hospital Group has different needs at site level in relation to training and infrastructure oversight of the funding and submission for projects was considered at Group Level led out by NDTP Trainer Leads with input from the local NCHD Leads.

Local projects supported through this fund included skills equipment, workshops, learning platforms and other initiatives.

## Covid-Era Post CSCST Fellowships

A significant increase In March 2021, the Minister for Health announced a commitment to further grow the capacity of Post CSCST fellowships in Ireland with the establishment of 40 Fellowships from July 2021. In 2021, 34 of these fellowship posts were filled across the following medical specialties:

- Medicine
- Psychiatry
- General Practice
- Paediatrics
- Pathology
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Surgery
- Public Health Medicine
- Occupational Medicine

## Intern Training Improvements

In 2021 a number of improvements to the Medical Intern year were established.

- Permanent increase in standard Intern intake numbers to 854. This equates to **20 additional posts** for each Intern Training Network.
- Permanent establishment of paid Intern shadowing week. The introduction of this week allows for one to one guided transition into real practice with fellow interns supervised by peers, network coordinators and associates supporting interns as they transition into independent clinical work.

## Specialist Training Increases

Intake numbers at both Basic and Higher Specialist Training Level increased to improve alignment with the demand projected by the Medical Workforce Report.

- 15% increase in year 1 General Practice trainees.
- 20% Increase to Surgery BST.
- 25% Increase to Psychiatry BST.
- 5.4% increase in Year 1 HST posts across all specialities.
- 50% increase in HST intake for Emergency Medicine .
- 31% Increase for HST intake for Medicine.

## Developmental Funding

### 23 Projects Funded

We continue to support our Medical Training stakeholders by providing a level of financial investment in original projects that will contribute to the career development of doctors.

These projects focus on developing clinical as well as professional skills. Examples of projects supported in 2021 include:

- Age-attuning the healthcare workforce in Waterford – a pilot project for Gerontological simulation-based teaching.
- Inclusion Health training for postgraduate medical trainees.
- An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence for Specialist Registrars in Radiology.
- Improving cultural competency across postgraduate training in Psychiatry.

The full list of the 2021 projects: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/publications/funded-projects-2021-complete.pdf>

## Two Medical Workforce Planning Reports published

- Medical Workforce Report 2020-2021
- Medical Workforce Planning for the Specialty of Psychiatry 2020-2030. An Expert Stakeholder Informed Review

## DIME: New Module and Enhancements

### NCHDs E-Portfolio

The new E-Portfolio module for Non Training Scheme Doctors was launched on 16 September 2021.

This free online module provides a central depository for NCHDs to record their training and career development. It also gives the NCHD the opportunity to have their experience validated by their supervising Consultant where applicable. Consultants also have the opportunity to provide structured feedback which is saved in the NCHD E-Portfolio. This E-Portfolio was designed in collaboration with NCHDs and Consultants, including NCHDs who have not completed their medical training in Ireland. At year end, there were over 2,000 records created within the E-Portfolio module.

### System Updates

DIME is a quadripartite system which encompasses National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP), the Irish Medical Council, the Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies and Clinical Sites. The DIME system continues to be upgraded and developed on an on-going basis and currently consists of eight separate modules. There are approximately 500 service users that have access to some or all the DIME modules. These service users include Medical Manpower teams, Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies and Occupational Health Departments.

As the demand for data from DIME increases we are constantly striving to enhance and improve the quality of data recorded. Service Patches are used to facilitate upgrades to the system throughout the year. 7 Service Patches and 8 Change Requests took place in 2021 which deployed new reporting features and fields including:

- Consultant Employment Details Report - three additional fields added:
  - Medical Practitioners Contract Class
  - Medical Practitioners Contract Type
  - Medical Discipline
- Consultant Post and Occupancy Report – One additional field:
  - 'Post Vacant From': This field details the date the post was last filled.

- Consultant Post Matching Module – New functionality was implemented to enable the identification of filled and permanent Biochemist posts.
- Improvements to the user display and ordering of Training Support Scheme applications.

## DIME Data Services

Information on the Consultant and NCHD workforce recorded on DIME continues to be a vital source of data across the HSE. e.g. Clinical Programmes and National HR. Data extracted from DIME informs strategic planning and decisions including Medical Workforce Planning. The data also forms the basis for responses to Parliamentary Questions and Freedom Of Information requests and is regularly requested from external stakeholders for example Department of Health.

A dedicated resource is in place in NDTP to analyse and monitor data compliance. This involves working with clinical sites to validate data ensuring that it is aligned to national policy e.g. NER compliance, post matching NCHDs and Consultants and escalating issues when required.

## Cyber Attack Response

On 14 May 2021, the HSE was subjected to a serious criminal cyberattack, through the infiltration of IT systems using Conti Ransomware. This resulted in the forced shut down of all HSE ICT systems including The DIME & NER systems were off line to all users including NDTP for a period of two months. NDTP were tasked with devising and implementing alternative paper-based solutions for all users while DIME was unavailable. Following consultation with our key partners the following are a summary of the temporary arrangements implemented:

- Training Support Scheme / Clinical Course Exam Refund Scheme: A temporary paper based process was introduced in order to enable NCHDs that were leaving

the Irish Public Health Service to submit TSS and CCERS applications to their local Medical Manpower / HR Dept.

- DIME: Manual processes were also put in place to facilitate the processing of Pre-employment screening documentation e.g. HR101 form, references, Garda Vetting, Occupational Health etc.
- Consultant Applications Advisory Committee (CAAC) Applications: As an interim measure, Sites and Hospital Groups reverted to paper application forms which were submitted via email to the Consultants Division.

Following the restoration of the DIME and NER systems a risk exercise was undertaken to assess the systems security, functionality and reporting. Upon assurances that the system was stable and fully functioning a significant project of work was undertaken to then update the system with retrospective data.

## Mandatory NCHD Training Matrix Document

A working group was established and facilitated by NDTP to explore NCHD mandatory training requirements. The group consisted of representatives from clinical sites and medical manpower managers which produced a guidance document. The document will assist NCHDs with identifying what training they must complete, where they can complete the training, how often they should seek re-certification and how long it should take to complete training. This guidance document will then be uploaded on the NER portal and DIME for quick and easy access by all NCHDs and Medical Manpower Managers.

## DIME Webpage

To visit the DIME webpage, please click on the following link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/database/>

# Year in Numbers

**2134**  
HST Trainees

**39**  
Press Queries responded to

**21** Change of Consultant Contracts approved

**3** Dr Richard Steevens Bursaries

**1845**  
BST Trainees

**81** DIME Data Requests

**2000**  
E-Portfolio Records

**547**  
Consultant Posts approved

**573** First Year HST Trainees

**12%** increase in Approved Consultant Posts

**8** DIME Change Requests

**29** Leadership and Management Scholarships

**10** CAAC Meetings

**40** New Post CSCST Fellowships

**4081**  
CCERS Applications approved

**40** Parliamentary Questions responded to

**854**  
Intern Posts

**560** Consultant Post Applications submitted

**7** DIME Service Patches

**245**  
First Year GP Trainees

**7600**  
NER accounts

**9268**  
TSS Applications approved

**13%** increase in Type C Applications

**501** Consultant Post Letters of Approval (LOA) issued

**3** Dr Richard Steevens Scholarships

**3** Type C Committee Meetings

**1** New DIME Module

# NCHD Workforce

We are responsible for meeting the HSE's legislative responsibilities in medical education and training as set out in the Health Act 2004 and the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 that include, among other things, that:

- The current and future needs of the public health service, in terms of medical training and specialist medicine workforce planning, are assessed, in order to ensure safe, quality patient care; and,
- The medical education and training system reflects, and is responsive to, the changing needs of the health service on a national and on-going basis.

Details are published at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/>

## NCHD Training 2021

The HSE is required to assess, on an annual basis, the number of intern posts, and the number and type of specialist medical training posts, required by the Health Service under Part 10 of the Medical Practitioners Act (MPA 2007).

The Medical Workforce Report for the 2020-2021 training year, which includes the annual assessment of NCHD posts along with data on the consultant workforce, is available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/plan/ndtp-workforce-report-2021-202211.pdf>

## Medical Intern Training

### 16% increase from standard intake

In March, 2021 the Department of Health and the HSE reviewed the option to increase the number of medical intern places for July 2021 to exceed the recommended numbers outlined in the Fottrell report (Medical Education in Ireland: A New Direction, 2006), similar to the emergency measure put in place in 2020. Following this the Minister for Health announced an

increase of 120 medical intern posts, to the standard intake, for July 2021.

The number of intern posts has decreased since 2020 from 995 to 854. This 14% reduction reflects a normalisation in the growth rate of interns after an exceptional intake as a response to the Covid-19 crisis. The current number of interns is 16% higher than the 2019 level (734).

While this increase in the number of Intern places exceeds the recommendations outlined in Fottrell report it was agreed that over the next twelve months the HSE accommodate an accompanying increase of postgraduate training places to ensure these doctors can avail of the next step of postgraduate training following completion of internship.

### Highlights of 2021 included:

- Increase to standard Intern intake numbers to 854 (20 additional posts for each Intern Training Network)
- Permanent establishment of paid Intern shadowing week, in addition to the paid intern induction week
- Curriculum Development – a working group was convened and knowledge guides, which are linked to the Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for internship, are being drafted to give details of what an intern needs to know. This project will be completed in Q3 2022.
- EPA Infographics – digital resources were created to support implementation of EPAs. These included a series of scenario videos demonstrating the use of workplace based assessment tools in the context of EPAs. Details are published at <https://www.youtube.com/user/HSEIreland/videos>
- Review of Intern posts: there are a number of different projects underway with multiple stakeholders in review of intern posts. This includes review of the quality and configuration of intern posts, remediation guidelines and review of the Intern recruitment and allocation process due to be completed in 2022.

## Intern Academic Track

### 24 Academic Track Interns Appointed

The Intern Academic Track programme provides the opportunity to undertake a three-month project to enhance skills and experience in clinical research, medical education or leadership and management skills.

## Basic Specialist Training (BST)

### 1845 BST trainees

#### Highlights of 2021 included:

- 838 BSTs commenced training with our Postgraduate training partners in July 2021.
- Intake to GP training increased to 245.
- Intakes for BST increased by 20% for Surgery and 25% for Psychiatry in 2021 compared with 2020, to align with workforce planning projections.

## Higher Specialist Training (HST)

### 2134 HST trainees

#### Highlights of 2021 included:

- 573 HSTs that commenced training programmes with our Postgraduate training partners in July 2021.
- The number of Year 1 Higher Specialist Training (HST) posts increased by 5.4% in 2021 from 541 to 573.
- Intakes for HST in the disciplines of Emergency Medicine and Medicine increased by 50% and 31% respectively in 2021 compared with 2020, to align with workforce planning projections.

## The Irish Medical Graduate Training Initiative

#### Over 200 IMGTI Doctors currently training in Ireland.

The Irish Medical Graduate Training Initiative enables overseas doctors in training to gain access to clinical experience on a scholarship basis e.g. HSE Scholarship Programme, College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP) / Sudan Medical Specialisation Board (SMSB) or through a fully sponsored Clinical Fellowship or Residential programme.

71 Scholarship IMGs and 73 Sponsored Fellowship IMGs commenced their 1st year of training in July 2021 joining over 60 trainees already participating.

Since its introduction IMGTI has continued to grow year on year and has now more than doubled, with an overall increase of 85 in 2014 to 204 in 2021. Despite the unique overseas recruitment challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, 2021 saw just over 19% increased intake to the programme. All stakeholders continue to be committed to further expansion of the programme with plans to further increase the annual intake, source additional countries and increase specialty offering over the next three years.

## Scholarships & Fellowships

Details relating to fellowships and scholarships are published at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/scholarships/>

### Dr Richard Steevens' Scholarships

This programme supports clinical training in recognised centres of excellence abroad and is aimed at NCHDs in the final stages of their HST.

#### Highlights of 2021 included:

3 scholarships awarded with funding provided up to the equivalent Specialist Registrar (SpR) salaries as well as a small number of bursaries.

#### Three Scholarships

- Dr Conor Judge: undertook a clinical fellowship in Nephrology and Home Dialysis Therapies in McMaster University and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
- Dr Aisling Semple: undertook a clinical fellowship in Paediatric Palliative Care (PPC) in The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto.
- Dr Clíodhna Browne, SpR in urology, undertook a clinical fellowship in urology in Austin Health, Melbourne, Australia.

#### Three Bursaries

- Dr Mark Murphy, SpR in radiology, undertook a Thoracic and Cardiac Imaging Fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital.
- Dr Catriona Goggin, SpR in Medical Oncology, undertook a Clinical Research Fellowship in soft tissue sarcoma at the Sarcoma Unit of The Royal Marsden Hospital, London.
- Dr Andrew Hughes, SpR in Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery, undertook a fellowship in International Pelvic and Lower Extremity Reconstruction at the Rothman Orthopaedic Institute, in Philadelphia.

A review of those that received funding under the scheme was conducted in 2021 and it found that 85% of those who received a scholarship or bursary between 2013 and 2018 were working as consultants in Ireland.

## Aspire Post CSCST Fellowships

The Aspire initiative provides full Post CSCST funding for fellowships in collaboration with the Acute Hospital Division and the Mental Health Division. The Aspire fellowships expanded to include Primary Care in 2021.

### 7 Aspire Fellowships

- Upper Limb and Reconstructive Microsurgery
- Integration of Fertility Care
- Paediatric Neurodisability & Rehabilitation
- Advanced Minimally Invasive Gynaecological Surgery
- Clinical Informatics in Emergency Medicine
- Prehospital frailty
- ENT Skills for Primary Care

## GP Academic Fellowships

The goal of the Fellowship Programme is to support the professional development of future leaders of academic general practice in the Irish health service. It does so by offering a structured three year programme of 1) research, 2) education and training and 3) clinical practice, all overseen by an academic department of general practice.

The scholarship includes salary, contribution towards PhD/MD fees and Academic fellows receive an annual training and development allowance.

Dr Muireann De Paor is availing of the Academic GP Fellowship in 2021. Recruitment for two new fellows will take place in 2022.

## Leadership & Management Scholarship

### 29 Scholarships Awarded

This scholarship provides part-funding to NCHDs pursuing a Master's Degree in Management and Leadership Skills. In 2021 the scholarship supported 16 doctors in their first year and a further 13 in their second year.

## Supporting NCHD Training

NDTP provide a suite of financial supports to alleviate high costs associated with the specialist training and continuous professional development.

Scheme policies and details are published at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/>

## Training Support Scheme (TSS)

### 9,270 approved applications

In light of the Covid - 19 pandemic and cognisant both of the work of NCHDs in the response to the virus and the cancelation of many courses, exams and conferences during the year, a decision was made by NDTP to allow NCHDs with balances remaining at 13th July 2020 to carry these balances into the new training year. Again due to the pandemic a second rollover was approved in July 2021 allowing NCHDs continued access to unused TSS balances for a further year until July 2022.

## Higher Specialist Training Fund (HSTF)

### 7 Post-graduate Training Bodies Funded

The HSTF fund is available to Higher Special Trainees and is administered through the Postgraduate Training Bodies. Trainees enrolled in Higher Specialist Training Programmes are entitled to €500 per year of recognised training to participate in education and training activities.

## Clinical Course and Exam Refund Scheme (CCERS)

### €2,702,706.95 refunded to NCHDs

The Clinical Course and Exam Refund Scheme continues to be a central financial support in Postgraduate Medical Training in Ireland. The full fees of eligible courses can be refunded to holders of the HSE NCHD contract (2010).

Details of these schemes and eligibility criteria etc can be found at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/fin/>

## Continual Professional Development Support Scheme (CPD-SS)

The CPD SS is an education programme open to NCHDs registered on the General or Supervised Division working in the public service. The Scheme is designed to enhance clinical knowledge and skills and fulfil some of the Medical Council legal requirements under the Professional Competence, and allows Doctors on the General Division access to educational activities worth up to 20 external CPD credits.

**1,692 NCHDs enrolled**

1,692 NCHDs enrolled in the CPD-SS, a 15% increase in participation on the previous year. Over 300 courses are available throughout the training year delivered by Postgraduate Training Bodies; generally over 15,000 CPD credits are attained by NCHDs who are not enrolled in specialist training programmes. A second enrolment date has been introduced in January 2022 allowing a further opportunity for NCHDs to register for the scheme each year. Further development of CPD-SS by training bodies during 2021/22 is expected and will include a number of 'Structured Pathway' offerings and additional educational activities.

**Flexible Training****32 NCHDs availing of scheme**

Developments in 2021 include:

- 29% increase in the number of applications received for the scheme compared with 2020 applications.
- Job share arrangements continued to be facilitated by RCPI in Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Histopathology for the 2021/22 training year. NDTP in collaboration with RCPI funded a job-share pilot programme for Histopathology and Paediatrics.
- To further expand job-sharing opportunities for trainees NDTP provided funding for a job-share pilot programme across multiple specialities for the 2021/22 training year. This facilitated new job-share arrangements within programmes which had not previously had job-share arrangements including Emergency Medicine, Anaesthesiology and Infectious Diseases.

**Lead NCHD Programme****84 Leads Appointed Nationally**

The Lead NCHD initiative is one of a range of initiatives

taken at national level to improve NCHD recruitment and retention in the Irish public health system.

The role is a recommendation from the MacCraith Report, and, while still developing, is critical to two-way communication between NCHDs and the management structures in hospitals around the country, which benefits NCHDs and patients. There are currently lead NCHDs across 32 acute hospitals, and the Community Health Organisations (CHOs).

**NDTP Trainer Leads**

There are now 9 NDTP Trainer Leads appointed across 5 hospital groups.

The primary role of the Trainer Lead is to support the delivery of training as appropriate to each clinical site. Trainer Leads have a key role in coordinating training issues at clinical site level and work closely with the Lead NCHDs in their respective hospital groups to act as a central point of contact for all training related issues, particularly from an educational governance perspective and relating to external stakeholders.

In response to the particular challenges facing the Trainer Leads in ensuring the delivery of postgraduate education within the COVID environment, NDTP provided funding to support the transition to new ways of working required to deliver post graduate training.

**Academic Clinicians**

NDTP, in partnership with Higher Education Authority (HEA) continued to fund six Academic Clinician posts within Medical School Academic Departments in 2021. These post holders play a central role in curricular reform and development, and the delivery of a modern balanced undergraduate medical training, reflective of the needs and strategic direction of the Irish health service.

# Medical Workforce Planning

## Activity 2021

In line with its statutory obligations, NDTP is tasked with projecting and proposing, on an annual basis, the number of post-graduate trainees required for each medical specialty. In order to do this NDTP works with specialty stakeholders including National Clinical Programmes, Postgraduate Training Bodies, senior clinicians and administrators across the acute hospital and community health care system to estimate the total demand for consultants and specialists.

## Medical Workforce Report 2020-2021

The Medical Workforce Report published by NDTP incorporates the mandated annual assessment of NCHDs in the health service as well as an assessment of the consultant medical workforce broken down by demographic and service level variables. The information in this report can be used for multiple purposes by a range of stakeholders, for example, in the development of medical workforce strategies around recruitment and retention, and in supply and demand modelling to better inform the current and future demand for consultants and trainees. The full report is available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/rep/medical-workforce-report-2020-21.pdf>

## Medical Workforce Planning for Specific Medical Specialties

Workforce planning involves developing demand projections for consultants and trainee doctors using a supply-demand statistically modelling approach incorporating such variables related to the demographic breakdown of the medical workforce, population ageing and related service utilisation projections, staffing standards and new models of service delivery. Government policy and strategy underpins workforce planning as appropriate. NDTP is currently developing specialty workforce plans for the specialties of Anaesthesiology (National Clinical Programme for Anaesthesia and the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland, along with a number of specialty specific experts),

Pathology (in conjunction with the National Clinical Programme for Pathology and representatives of each of the specialties of Pathology) and Surgery (in conjunction with the National Clinical Programmes for Surgery, RCSI and representatives of the specialties of Surgery).

The projects will outline projected future medical staffing needs for the specialty, specifically consultants and trainees. Non-training scheme doctor demand will also be explored. Outputs from these projects are expected to be published from Q3 2022 onwards.

## Psychiatry

A medical workforce plan for Psychiatry was published in 2021 and outlined the projected increase in the consultant and trainee workforce in order to facilitate the implementation of Vision for Change/ Vision for Change Refresh as well as new initiatives related to Clinical Programmes and other projects. Work is on-going in NDTP, the Mental Health Division of the HSE and the College of Psychiatrists in Ireland to ensure the training pipeline is sufficient to meet the medical workforce needs outlined in this report.

Implementation of the recommendations involves identifying non-training scheme doctor posts that can be converted to training scheme doctor posts so that future demand for consultants will be met. Further work has been done to highlight the demand and supply of doctors within sub-specialty categories.

## Retention of Irish Trained Doctors

There is little quantitative evidence on the migration patterns of training doctors in Ireland. NDTP is currently undertaking a study to estimate the number of trainee doctors leaving the Irish health system and the numbers returning. This study uses data from the DIME (Doctors Integrated Management E-System) database to track the career paths of doctors from internships to consultant posts.

# Consultant Workforce

## Consultant Posts

### 3862 Approved Permanent

On 31 December 2021, there were a total of 3,862 approved permanent Consultant posts nationally, an increase of 12% when compared to 31 December 2020.

## Consultant Applications Advisory Committee

### 547 Posts Approved

- 10 Meetings held during 2021
- 560 applications submitted\*
- 501 Letters of Approval (LOA) issued

\*A number carried over from previous year

### Applications approved at Consultant Applications Advisory Committee (CAAC)- 2020 and 2021

APPLICATION TYPE	2020	2021
Change of Contract	20	21
New	155	409
Replacement & Restructure	35	29
Replacement	69	82
Restructure	19	27
	298	568

## Applications approved, excluding Change of Contracts, at CAAC 2021 by Medical Discipline

SPECIALTY	NEW POST	REPLACEMENT & RESTRUCTURE POST	REPLACEMENT POST	RESTRUCTURE POST	TOTAL
Anaesthesiology	36	5	11	1	53
Emergency Medicine	24		5		29
Intensive Care Medicine	7				7
Medicine	189	7	16	11	223
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	10	2	3		15
Paediatrics	11		2	3	16
Pathology	42	2	8	2	54
Psychiatry	23	6	20	2	51
Radiology	32	1	3	3	39
Surgery	35	6	14	5	60
	409	29	82	27	547

## Type C

### 31 Contract Changes Approved

Key activity in 2021:

- 3 Meetings were held during 2021
- 13% increase in Type C applications since 2020

A schedule of the qualifications applicable to the different types of consultant posts is held by CAAC, and can be accessed on the HSE National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP) website by clicking <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/consultantapplications/quals1/>

# Innovation and Improvement – “The Spark Programme”

The Spark Innovation Programme is a Frontline Innovation Arm within the HSE made up of clinicians, administrative staff and designers. It tackles the following problem “How might we engage and empower frontline staff to generate and implement innovative solutions to persistent challenges for the benefit of patients, staff and the Health Service?”

## The Aims of the Spark Innovation Programme:

- Empower and engage frontline staff in innovation across all healthcare disciplines
- Provide design and innovation expertise to promote the role of human-centred thinking in the health system
- Promote early engagement with emerging technology
- Create a network of innovators to spread successful innovative ideas at all levels of healthcare provision

The programme is funded and supported by the National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) in collaboration with the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD), the Office of Health and Social Care Professionals (HSCP) and the National Quality Improvement Team (QIT). Further information can be found at [www.hse.ie/spark](http://www.hse.ie/spark) Email: [spark@hse.ie](mailto:spark@hse.ie) for queries related to the programme.

## Engagement

### >500,000 Social Media Impressions

- This year Spark boasted a five-fold increase in engagement on social media.
- It also launched a brand new Instagram page to engage with users on different platforms.

### 5 ‘Innovator of the Week’ Awards

2021 saw the launch of ‘Innovator of the Week’ – an award to celebrate and inspire Health Care Workers through the stories of healthcare innovators all over Ireland.

## Initiatives

### Spark Seed Funding - 215 Projects Entered

An initiative open to frontline healthcare staff with innovative solutions to problems within the Health Service. This initiative refines and supports ideas from healthcare staff and provides mentorship and design thinking workshops from the Spark team before a pitching event for support and funding. 2021 demonstrated a record number of applications.

### 70 projects supported

#### Examples of Implemented Projects:

- “Nursing Home Champions” Programme – Beaumont Hospital – initiative to prevent inappropriate admissions from residential care facilities.
- “Make Periods Great Again” – University Hospital Waterford – Staff Wellbeing Project supplying sanitary projects in staff bathrooms.
- ‘Fertility and Cancer’ a patient information resource for pregnant patients with cancer.

## Spark Ignite

Spark Ignite enables staff to develop their ideas through validation of clinical need and to analyse the market for their proposed solution, product, or service. Successful applicants benefit from a bespoke healthcare focused innovation workshop delivered by experts, where they hone their idea and then proceed to pitch for funding.

- Remote Learning in Bronchoscopy using Airway Simulator – Training Aid leading to reduction in risk
- The Rapid-Access Online Active Back Care (ABC) Program – tackles waiting lists in Orthopaedic referral
- A Novel Ankle Range of Motion (ROM) measuring device

## Design on the Frontline

### 4 Projects Supported

Design on the Frontline is an initiative to engage the design and innovation community to work with healthcare workers to identify new solutions to pressing challenges. Successful projects included:

- Arctic Band – A means of reducing core body temperature while wearing PPE – undergoing feasibility testing in St James’s Hospital
- WAFFLE – a communication app for older adults to alleviate social isolation

## Design Workshops

### 115 projects 5 Workshops 6 Pitch events

Five workshops were held with 115 projects from across Ireland. Workshops were led by design experts with a focus on scoping the clinical problem and reimagining/reworking the solution. Six pitch events followed these workshops to evaluate for funding and support from the Spark Programme.

### 2 Design Week Challenges

- Mater Hospital
- St James’s Hospital

### 5 MakerLabs

- Connolly Hospital
- Cork University Hospital
- Galway University Hospital
- Midlands Regional Hospital, Tullamore
- Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda

These spaces provide a place for innovators to brainstorm, design and prototype their healthcare solutions.

## Network

### National Innovation Network

A growing Network of Innovation and Design Hubs in Hospitals around the country – gathering together to share experience and resources.









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ISBN NUMBER IS 978-1-78602-206-6.